

## BRIEFER ARTICLES

BYRON DAVID HALSTED

(WITH PORTRAIT)

With the passing of BYRON DAVID HALSTED we have lost another of our pioneer botanists. Although not one of the earliest pioneers, he was a pioneer in many respects. He was one of that group of botanists who laid the foundation of the science in America at a time when the subject was recognized by very few American colleges and universities. He was one of that still smaller group who took up the study of applied botany and worked faithfully for its advancement.

Our younger plant pathologists know how difficult it is to find a disease of an economic crop that is not at least mentioned in his reports. He was among the first to report the introduction of several foreign pathogenic organisms.

Born at Venice, Cayuga County, New York, June 7, 1852, he was left an orphan at an early age and was cared for by relatives. He graduated from the Michigan Agricultural College with the degree of B.S. in 1871, and received the M.S. degree from the same college in 1874. In 1878 he received the Sc.D. degree from Harvard, being the first man to take the doctorate in cryptogamic botany from that university. He was managing editor of the *American Agriculturist* from 1880 to 1885; Professor of Botany in the Iowa Agricultural College 1885-1889; and Professor of Botany in Rutgers College



and Botanist of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station from 1889 until his death, August 26, 1918. Had he lived until February, 1919, he would have rounded out a full 30 years in the service of the state of New Jersey. During the greater part of these 30 years he was active in both College and Station, but in the latter part of his career poor health necessitated his retirement from the classroom.

Although a very busy man, he found time to serve his science by acting as Associate Editor of the *Bulletin of the Torrey Botanical Club* from 1890 to 1893 and as a contributor to the *Systematic Flora of North America*. In 1877 the Massachusetts Horticultural Society honored him with its silver medal. He was a member of a number of scientific societies, serving as president of the Society for the Promotion of Agriculture from 1877 to 1879 and of the Botanical Society of America in 1900-1901.

Dr. HALSTED was a true lover of nature, and nature made him a most warm hearted and lovable man. He loved to commune with nature and was a most enthusiastic collector. In addition to his own studies, he furnished a great quantity of material for study by other mycologists and from which many new species were described; in fact, the mycological collections not only of America but of the entire world contain material collected by him.

The writer looked upon him as a botanist of the old school, and yet he was an up-to-date botanist in every way. After devoting the greater part of his career to mycology, poor health and a failing eyesight forced him to abandon his favorite line of work. He could not leave the field of botany, however, but merely transferred his efforts to a line of plant breeding which did not require the use of the microscope, and worked with the renewed energy and the enthusiasm of a boy.

Dr. HALSTED was more than a botanist; he was a broad, scholarly man and a public spirited citizen. He was always interested in athletics and in his youth was an amateur baseball pitcher. He never lost his interest in the sport, but was a regular attendant at intercollegiate games, always placing himself so that he could observe the work of the pitcher. His love for literature and his keen interest in the state and community were made manifest by a poem which he wrote on the occasion of a civic parade when the nation was called to arms in 1917.

He was the author of many papers, and while most of us will think of him as a scientist, it should be remembered that many of his papers had to do with other subjects.—MEL. T. COOK, *New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, New Brunswick, N.J.*